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RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4344  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8319  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3085  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1147  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 3575  
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 3031  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 6823  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 5371  
RHMFISS/USFJ  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 000600

SIPDIS

FOR EAP/J

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [JA](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: JAPAN'S OPPOSITION PARTY OFFERS VARYING VIEWS ON  
CHINA

REF: A. 08 TOKYO 3435

[1](#)B. TOKYO 567

[1](#)C. 08 TOKYO 2376

[1](#)D. TOKYO 51

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Classified By: CDA James P. Zumwalt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Japan's largest opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), lacks a coherent, unified message on China policy. Most party members agree on the importance of strengthening Sino-Japanese ties and believe that a DPJ-led government would have to handle relations with China carefully and with extreme diligence. That said, as a party that includes political transplants from other parties, the DPJ suffers from a diversity of opinion that makes policy cohesion difficult. Recent discussions between Embassy Tokyo and DPJ members across the ideological spectrum suggest that the same wide range of views that typifies the party's approach to most topics also applies to DPJ perspectives on China. In particular, threat perceptions of China differ greatly among party members. END SUMMARY

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Broad Agreement on Importance of China as Part of Asia Policy  
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[1](#)2. (C) DPJ members from across the ideological spectrum agree on the importance of Sino-Japanese ties as part of an overall foreign policy focus on Asia. The party stresses the importance of deepening relationships with Asian countries, including China, in its party Manifesto. The Manifesto highlights the need to build "proactive foreign relations" and to create a more "Asia-centered" foreign policy. As a member of Asia, Japan must strengthen "solidarity" and trust with neighbors, such as China and South Korea (Ref A). DPJ head Ichiro Ozawa, whose views on China serve as the party's public default position, meets annually with Chinese

leadership and, last month, urged stronger ties when he met visiting Chinese Communist Party International Department Chief Wang Jiarui (Ref B). In slight contrast, Ozawa took a firm position on China during his meeting with Secretary Clinton days earlier, calling on Washington and Tokyo to work together to make sure China's economy avoids any downturn.

13. (C) To build regional trust, Japan must venture beyond the official development assistance (ODA) policies of the past, according to Upper House member and DPJ International Bureau official Masamitsu Naito. ODA was the first phase of Japan's role in Asia, Naito recently told US Embassy Tokyo. The second and third phases involved Japanese direct investment and exporting high-quality goods, respectively. The current phase includes Japan importing goods and services from Asia. The country also needs to establish more cabinet-level political and economic exchanges with Asian counterparts, as well as open multiple channels of dialogue beyond the Foreign Ministry. "Parliamentary diplomacy" can be an effective means to engage the region as a whole, asserted Naito.

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Threat Perceptions Determine Views on How to Manage Relations  
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14. (C) DPJ members differ on the extent to which they see regional engagement as a means to curb Chinese influence in Asia. For those DPJ members who downplay the aggressiveness of Chinese military and political intentions, encircling Japan's neighbor to the East has little efficacy. Known for possessing liberal policymaking preferences, four-term Lower

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House DPJ member Shoichi Kondo told Embassy Tokyo that he sees China as both a "rival" and a "partner" for Japan, particularly on economic issues because Japan and China are two of the world's largest economies. He questioned the wisdom of labeling China as a military "threat" and frowned upon hardened attitudes on issues such as the longstanding dispute over gas resources in the East China Sea and competing territorial claims over the Senkaku Islands. He underscored the importance of reducing Japanese anxieties about Chinese military and economic growth. Kondo also stressed calm in response to last year's announcement from Beijing about China's aircraft carrier production program. Generally speaking, all countries "have the right to self-defense," he asserted. Doubts also remain as to whether China possesses the technology and knowhow to achieve its military production goals, he added.

15. (C) Japan should pursue policies that build trust in the region and create an environment that would compel China to behave responsibly on the international stage, Kondo urged. For example, properly atoning for Japan's colonial past would go a long way toward reducing the animosity that still exists between Japan and China and toward instilling confidence in bilateral ties. The relationship has been improving, particularly after the tenure of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, whose visits to Japan's controversial Yasukuni Shrine regularly exacerbated tensions between the two countries. Japan and China are holding more leaders' summits and both sides believe that robust ties are critical, particularly in the face of current challenges, such as the global financial crisis, Kondo said.

16. (C) DPJ party centrists such as Naito see regional engagement as a way simultaneously to check and engage China. Unlike Kondo, Naito stated leering toward China, seeing Asian outreach as a way to offset Chinese regional influence. He wants Japan to play more proactive roles in multilateral gatherings, such as APEC and ASEAN, to strengthen dialogue with Beijing and to ensure China takes a constructive approach to regional policymaking.

17. (C) For national security realists, threat perceptions of China run especially high. Many lawmakers are anxious about Chinese military intentions, Upper House member Katsuya Ogawa pointed out. Chinese military spending is increasing by double digits every year, four-term Lower House DPJ member Shu Watanabe observed separately. China is conducting submarine surveillance in preparation for a Taiwan Strait contingency and to deter potential U.S. involvement. China's global strategy is to dominate Asia first, then space, and finally the high seas, Watanabe continued. On the economic front, China conducts business with non-democratic states, such as Burma and the Sudan. Beijing has funded the national parliament building and the city hall edifice in that African country, Watanabe noted. As to how Japan should deal with China, Watanabe admitted that he is at a loss and thinks that his own party, if in power, would not be tough enough.

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Diverse Opinions on Taiwan  
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18. (C) Although these interlocutors talked little about their views on Taiwan, corresponding ideological differences exist within the party. While many members downplay Chinese military intentions and discount Chinese threat perceptions, notable Taiwan supporters, such as party Vice President Seiji Maehara, call for taking a harder line against China in part by increasing Japan's defense capabilities and safeguarding sea lanes. Lower House Member Yoshito Sengoku heads the DPJ's Japan-Taiwan Friendship Parliamentary Council -- a

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group that includes roughly 70 members, enjoys close ties to the Democratic People's Party, rather than the KMT, and advocates human rights and democracy in Taiwan. Another DPJ group, the Japan-Taiwan Security and Economic Study Group, supports Taiwan's full and long-term reintegration into the international community and is headed by well-known pro-Taiwan Diet member Akihisa Nagashima (Ref C). On the other hand, former DPJ President Katsuya Okada has told the Charge that in the case of a Taiwan contingency, Japan would not make its territory available to U.S. forces because it would take Japan "generations" to recover from such a decision (Ref D).

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Bio Notes  
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19. (C) Shoichi Kondo studied in Beijing from 1981-1983. He speaks Mandarin well and has a staff aide who speaks the language fluently. Kondo has deep interest in Chinese and Korean affairs. Since his second term as a Diet member, Kondo has regularly visited China and has participated in activities such as tree-planting ceremonies. Last year, he participated in a Japan-China youth exchange program. Kondo is a co-representative of "Liberal-no-kai" (Association of Liberals), which comprises seven DPJ Lower House members and six DPJ Upper House members.

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